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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended)   A document search system capable of instructing a document search by specifying a document database to be searched next among a plurality of document databases based on a search result of a document database, comprising: ~~a step of~~:

~~storing~~ an associative search recording table recording ~~the~~ a number of times x_{ij} of searching a document database j based on a search result of a document database i.

2. (Currently Amended)   The document search system according to claim 1, ~~further~~ comprising: ~~a step of~~: changing a showing order of document databases to be searched by using data from said associative search recording table.

3. (Currently Amended)   The document search system according to claim 1, wherein a differing said associative search recording table is stored for each user, and, by using said associative search recording table for each user, a showing order of document databases to be searched is changed according to a user.

4. (Currently Amended)   The document search system according to claim 1, ~~further~~ comprising: ~~a step of~~: calculating a registration fee of each document database by using said associative search recording table.

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5. (Currently Amended) The document search system according to claim 4, wherein a registration fee is calculated according to a sum of ~~the~~ a number of times of being a search origin for a document search and ~~the~~ a number of times of being a search target for a document search.

6. (Currently Amended) A search server for mediating between a search client and a plurality of document databases, the search server being capable of instructing a document search by specifying a document database to be searched next among plurality of document databases based on a search result of a document database, ~~and~~ comprising:

search query analyzing means for analyzing a search query from said search client;

search query constructing means for sending the search query analyzed by said search query analyzing means to the document database specified by the search client;

means for sending a search result of said specified document database to said search client; and

associative search recording table storing means for storing an associative search recording table recording ~~the~~ a number of times x_{ij} of searching a document database j based on a search result of a document database i.

7. (Currently Amended) The search server according to claim 6, ~~further~~ comprising: showing order changing means for changing a showing order of

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document databases to be searched and to be shown to said search client by using

<u>data from</u> said associative search recording table.

8. (Original)   The search server according to claim 6, comprising said

associative search recording table storing means which stores an associative search

recording table for each user, and the showing order changing means for changing a

showing order of document databases to be searched and to be shown to said

search client according to a user by using said associative search recording table for

each user.

9. (Original)   The search server according to claim 6, wherein a registration

fee of each document database is calculated by using said associative search

recording table stored by said associative search recording table storing means.

10. (New)   The document search system according to claim 1, wherein for

each document database of a plurality of select document databases, the

associative search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for

recording a respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j

based on a search result of differing ones of document databases i, respectively.

11. (New)   The document search system according to claim 1, comprising

storing, in the associative search recording table, a number of times x_{ij} of searching a

document database j based on a search result of a keyword i.

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12. (New)   The document search system according to claim 11, wherein for

each document database of a plurality of select document databases, the

associative search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for

recording a respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j

based on a search result of differing ones of document databases or keywords i,

respectively.

13. (New)   The search server according to claim 6, wherein for each

document database of a plurality of select document databases, the associative

search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for recording a

respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j based on a

search result of differing ones of document databases i, respectively.

14. (New)   The search server according to claim 6, comprising storing, in the

associative search recording table, a number of times x_{ij} of searching a document

database j based on a search result of a keyword i.

15. (New)   The search server according to claim 14, wherein for each

document database of a plurality of select document databases, the associative

search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for recording a

respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j based on a

search result of differing ones of document databases or keywords i, respectively.

16. (New)   A document search method enabling instructing a document

search by specifying a document database to be searched next among a plurality of

document databases based on a search result of a document database, comprising:

storing an associative search recording table recording a number of times x_{ij}

of searching a document database j based on a search result of a document

database l; and,

using data from the associative search recording table to help specify a

document database to be searched next among a plurality of document databases.

17. (New)   A document search method according to claim 16, comprising:

changing a showing order of document databases to be searched by using data from

said associative search recording table.

18. (New)   A document search method according to claim 16, wherein a

differing said associative search recording table is stored for each user, and, by

using said associative search recording table for each user, a showing order of

document databases to be searched is changed according to a user.

19. (New)   A document search method according to claim 16, comprising:

calculating a registration fee of each document database by using said associative

search recording table.

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20. (New)   A document search method according to claim 19, comprising

calculating the registration fee according to a sum of a number of times of being a

search origin for a document search and a number of times of being a search target

for a document search.

21. (New)   A document search method according to claim 16, wherein for

each document database of a plurality of select document databases, the

associative search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for

recording a respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j

based on a search result of differing ones of document databases i, respectively.

22. (New)   A document search method according to claim 16, comprising

storing, in the associative search recording table, a number of times x_{ij} of searching a

document database j based on a search result of a keyword i.

23. (New)   A document search method according to claim 22, wherein for

each document database of a plurality of select document databases, the

associative search recording table has plural entries with differing entries for

recording a respective number of times x_{ij} of searching the document database j

based on a search result of differing ones of document databases or keywords i,

respectively.